

W r e s t l i n g

P e r s p e c t i v e

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Let It Bleed?

By - Paul MacArthur

The use of blood in professional wrestling has served many purposes. Many fans consider blood to be an integral element of this surrealistic violent sport. Others find that blood, when purposefully, integrated into a storyline, augments the quality of a wrestling match. In issue #1 of *Wrestling Perspective*, we stated that "a four star confrontation can become an all-time classic" with the addition of blood. Another view suggests that blood is simply unnecessary, if not barbaric. According to Lou Thesz, blood is something wrestlers who lack actual wrestling talent use to get over. Blood has been a part of the sport for decades. But its continued use of in professional wrestling, particularly over the past five years, has led to a reoccurring question: Is there any reason, when professional wrestling has evolved through such stars as Jushin Liger, Bobby Eaton, Shawn Michaels, Kenta Kobashi, Ric Flair and Ricky Steamboat, to rely upon a self-inflicted head wound to create heat? Furthermore, when Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) is known to be spread through blood, can any promoter in good conscience ask his wrestlers to participate in a match that requires the spilling of one's own blood?

Professional wrestling has changed dramatically over the past 10 years. The WWF became a dominant national promotion, forcing several promoters out of business in the process. Jim Crockett Promotions destroyed the National Wrestling Alliance, and with it the concept of a touring world's champion, in his attempt to compete with the WWF. Cable television - already a dumping ground for televised wrestling - experienced the rapid growth stage of its product life cycle and flooded wrestling fans' homes with hour after hour of wrestling. Steroids, previously use by a minority of wrestlers, became the drug of choice, or perhaps, the drug of necessity. The Eighties changed professional wrestling in many ways, but somehow a practice the business calls "blading" still exists; in some cases, in excess.

If you describe the blading process to someone outside the world of professional wrestling, their response is one of disgust. If you tell them that the Sheik's forehead bleeds on a hot day because of the scar tissue caused by blading, disgust turns to revulsion. Yet many professional wrestling fans find this intriguing, if not entertaining. Why? Why is there a fascination in watching self-mutilation? Why do we want to watch a man cut himself and bleed on another man? Is it our own way of making the illusion of professional wrestling real, even though street fights rarely cause cuts above the eyebrow? If so, have we forgotten what we are watching? Doesn't the marquee say "professional wrestling?"

For some promotions, blading is not only common, but crucial to their success. Atshushi Onita is not the most talented worker in the world, and perhaps this supports Thesz's thesis. In many ways, Onita resembles an older Dusty Rhodes; using self-promotion, charisma, moderate wrestling ability, excessive violence, and the willingness to bleed from several areas of his body, to become a superstar. Onita's FMW formula has made him a rich man. He discovered a market niche and is tapping into it with undeniable success. Some would argue that a certain fan base demands blood and Onita is merely using the economic theory of supply and demand to his advantage by giving fans what they want: blood. But at what cost? Would you let Onita bleed on you? If not, why not? Why do fans want to see Onita bleed on someone else, and in some cases share blood with other wrestlers? Is this what makes professional wrestling entertaining?

Many wrestlers are beginning to be concerned about the use of blood in a match. In Issue 36 of *Wrestling Perspective*, Stan Lane discussed his opposition to blading at length. In this issue, the Spoiler does the same. While not horrified, they are opposed to using

a blade to create heat. They are concerned about self-mutilation. They are also concerned about the health risks presented by the practice of blading. They should be.

Human blood contains many cells, bacteria and viruses. Among the many viruses and germs found in a person's blood are mononucleosis, syphilis, hepatitis, and HIV; which often leads to AIDS. Incidents of transmission of these four diseases though contact with human blood are well documented. Transmission of mononucleosis and hepatitis through blood and other bodily fluids is common. A doctor became infected with syphilis after accidentally pricking his finger with a syringe used on a patient. The case of an HIV positive dentist who infected five patients is well known. Tennis legend Arthur Ashe acquired HIV through a blood transfusion. The list goes on with severe and often tragic consequences. What's intriguing and, more importantly, applicable about these medical facts, is that professional wrestlers, are at high risk of contracting all of these diseases by virtue of the lifestyles they lead. Allow them to bleed on each other and as Lane said, "You're just asking to die."

Why are you asking to die if you allow your opponent to cut himself, or open your own wound? The answer, while not at all complex, is often overlooked by promoters, fans and wrestlers alike. The risk of AIDS among individuals who have multiple sex partners is far greater than their counterparts who have monogamous relationships or practice abstinence. An individual is at far greater risk of contracting AIDS if he or she does not practice "safer sex." The incidence of AIDS among homosexuals is far greater than heterosexuals. AIDS is also more prevalent among intravenous drug users. Professional wrestling has individuals who fall into all of these four high risk groups. You are deluding yourself if you believe otherwise. With many wrestlers falling into one of these high risk groups, it is unlikely that there is not a single wrestler on the circuit who does not

have the HIV virus. The question is not does one wrestler have HIV, but how many wrestlers have HIV?

If a wrestler has HIV and does not know this important fact about his health, he could quite conceivably affect his fellow wrestlers by sharing the same sexual partners, sharing syringes, having sex with them or by giving them blood. The question is, would bleeding on another wrestler in a match lead to the spread of the virus? It's possible, particularly if both men were to bleed in a match. If a promoter expects his wrestlers to bleed, does he have a moral obligation to ensure the wrestler who is bleeding and his opponent will not contract HIV? Promoters still book matches with blood, but how many of them periodically test their wrestlers for HIV?

Jim Cornette, as evidenced by his commentary in Issue 37 of *Wrestling Perspective*, does not share Lane's and Jardine's concerns on the issue of blading. He says many wrestlers in his promotion have known each other for years and trust each other. He asked which would you rather do, screw three hookers without a condom or, "get a little color?" Following Cornette's logic, since the practice of blading presents a smaller risk of HIV contraction than unprotected sex with a prostitute, it presents minimal health risks. To date, he is correct. There are no known reported cases of a wrestler contracting HIV through blading. If the practice of blading continues, however, that statistic will change. To Cornette's credit, he has stated he will not book a wrestler in a match that requires blood, if the wrestler has a problem with blading. While one can argue about Cornette's logic for continuing to utilize blood in 1993, his willingness to accommodate a wrestler's request in this potentially life threatening situation is deserving of respect. Moreover, Cornette has placed the responsibility of this situation where it ultimately belongs, with the wrestlers themselves.

There have been some instances where

wrestlers were involuntarily cut by their opponents. There are other cases where wrestlers have cut themselves deep enough to hit a gusher or an artery. There are cases where the wrestlers have required numerous stitches after a match, simply because they cut themselves with a blade. But, by and large, wrestlers who blade today do so on their own free will, with full knowledge of the risks involved. It isn't 1975 anymore. Wrestlers know they can say no. Many wrestlers balk at doing a clean job, which presents far fewer health risks than blading. Yet, most wrestlers don't protest blading. Few wrestlers today refuse to bleed. There are some and they are smart. They are smart because they understand the risks and are not willing to take them. But what about the wrestlers who take this enormous risk?

The wrestler who bleeds in match has several obligations. His first and foremost obligation is to his opponent. Thus, he should be tested for the HIV virus at least twice a year and must be sure he is free of other communicable diseases. His second obligation is to his sexual partners. If he is going take this risk, he should protect his partners by practicing "safer sex." His third obligation is to himself. He must do everything in his power to prevent catching a disease that could kill him, his loved ones and his business associates. This includes practicing "safer sex," monogamy or abstinence, refraining from using intravenous drugs - including steroids - and ensuring his partners and business associates are free from communicable diseases. His fourth obligation is to society. Society should not pay the financial burdens of a man who willingly put himself at risk of contracting HIV/AIDS. Thus the wrestler who takes this risk should be prepared to pay the cost, without expecting society to pay for his medical treatment. This includes buying proper medical insurance and saving enough money to cover his medical expenses.

How many professional wrestlers who bleed in the ring do this? The burden of

responsibility is often one too heavy to carry, even for a man who can bench press 500 pounds. To this day, many wrestlers laugh about "safer sex." They are asking to die. Some wrestlers still use steroids. They are asking for poor health down the road. Many wrestlers bleed in the ring. They are asking for a slow painful death. Yet, the immediate reward of a paycheck led hundreds of professional wrestlers to use steroids in the Eighties and early Nineties. The immediate pleasure of unprotected sex has led many wrestlers to discard the condom. The immediate reward of heat and the ability to draw has led many wrestlers to mutilate themselves in the ring. Thus, today many wrestlers act out of greed and the need for immediate satisfaction without a vision of the future, never seeing the long term ramifications of their actions.

Somehow, despite overwhelming evidence that blood isn't necessary to draw fans, as Vince McMahon has demonstrated for years, promoters continue to use it.

Somehow despite the health risks, wrestlers continue to bleed in the ring. For some strange reason, some fans continue to demand blood. With some exceptions, however, their numbers are rarely enough to make a noticeable difference in profits. The practice of blading and the irresponsibility of those who promote blading continues. One day, the death toll will continue as well.

Why must we demand blood? Why do promoters want to give the fans blood? Why will wrestlers give us blood? Perhaps it's because some of the greatest matches of all time used blood. Many remember the brutality fight between Pat Patterson and Sgt. Slaughter with delight. The Magnum T.A. vs. Tully Blanchard "I Quit" match is an all-time classic. The recent Onita/Terry Funk barbed wire is a hot tape collectors item. Perhaps we've all seen a match with blood that wouldn't be quite the same without it. Maybe that's true. Maybe the skillful use of blood can make a wrestling

match that much more exciting. However, in 1993, to even accept, or worse, demand blood, when one of its possible ramifications is a slow painful death, is nothing more than morally bankrupt selfish behavior worthy of condemnation.

As fans of professional wrestling, and therefore fans of professional wrestlers, we must change our standards with changing realities of the Nineties. We can no longer accept blood in professional wrestling. It is time that professional wrestling elevate its standards to those set by the NBA in this regard. If there is blood in a wrestling match, for the safety of its participants, the match must be stopped until the cut has been shut or the participant is removed from the area. It is a simple issue of health. As fans, to accept any less protection of the athletes whom we claim to admire, shows we truly have no more respect for our sport and its participants than the elitist sports writers who dismiss professional wrestling as "fake."

Sidelines

Thanks To Dave Meltzer for the recent plug. The support is appreciated.

Fantasy Federation the wonderful newsletter featuring imaginary matches and great commentary, will cease publication at the end of the year. Jeff Cohen has done a marvelous job with Fantasy Federation, and it will be missed. If you never tried Fantasy Federation, now is your chance to enjoy a special newsletter through Cohen's "Back Issue Bonanza." Anyone who sends \$2, will receive at least three back issues of Fantasy Federation. This is fantastic opportunity you shouldn't pass up. Fantasy Federation is available from Jeff Cohen at 50 Shelley Lane, Great Neck, NY 11023.

Don't Miss Our Next Issue which will feature part two of our interview with the Spoiler, The Phantom Of The Ring takes a

look at Wrestling Journalist Dan Parker, a column by Bill "Potshot" Kunkel and more. If your subscription expires with this issue, you know what to do... RENEW TODAY!

Coming Up In Future Issues • Over the next few months, we have great things scheduled, including a fantastic interview with Ted Lewin, the Phantom looks at Strangler Lewis, Jim Londos and other grappling greats, and exclusive commentary from MacArthur, Skolnick, Kunkel & McGowen. Of course, there's much more so stay tuned.

The Holidays Are Fast Approaching which means it's time to give your friends the gift that gives means something a little more than fruitcake. Yes, of course, we mean the *Wrestling Perspective* gift subscription. It's simple: give a friend a

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Correction From Last Month • In Jim Cornette interview in issue #38, we mistakenly mentioned that Jim Cornette was working for Dave Meltzer on the Real Wrestling Hotline. Dave Meltzer does not

own the Real Wrestling Hotline. While he did receive a much publicized offer to be a partner in the Real Wrestling Hotline, he rejected it. The owners of the Real Wrestling Hotline are Jim Herd, Wayne Coulter and George Middleton. We apologize for any confusion.

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In Perspective: Don "The Spoiler" Jardine

Don "The Spoiler" Jardine's 30-year wrestling career spans several continents and virtually all of the United States and Canada. Throughout his career, he wrestled a territory here, a territory there just long enough to make good money, and then move on. Things were different during most of his career, as with only four full time promotions, those opportunities just don't exist anymore. Jardine has seen the business and society change quite a bit during his career and in this interview conducted by Paul MacArthur on June 10, 1993, he had quite a bit to say about both. Jardine discusses several issues, including the changes in wrestling, today's wrestlers, drug abuse, Spoiler Enterprises and much more.

Wrestling Perspective: How did you get started in the wrestling business?

Don Jardine: I got started in the wrestling business in a little town in eastern Canada. A friend of mine I knew from high school was involved and we used to work out all the time. Eventually I met up with Whipper Bill Watson around the age of 18, moved to Toronto and started from there.

WP: Did you actually train with Whipper Watson?

DJ: Yes I did. Whipper Watson and Tex Flannigan.

WP: How was he as a teacher, given his broad experience?

DJ: He was good. A British Empire Champion, a World's Champion. He wrestled around the world, Canada and the United States.

WP: What year did you start?

DJ: Well, I actually started when I was in school in 1955. Then I went on the road in 1958. So it's been over 30 years as I still do wrestle.

WP: You still wrestle part-time?

DJ: Yes. I've got a couple shows I'm promoting here in Florida.

WP: How do you like the promoting end of it?

DJ: Well, it's a lot different than just wrestling. Especially today when there aren't any organizations. The wrestlers are all independents. Most of them aren't quality wrestlers and some of them don't even show up and don't care. A lot of them are on steroids. They just don't care anymore. That's the way the whole society is. So I try to pick up wrestlers that are the most dependable. I put them under contract. If they don't show up, I just take them to court. I call my wrestling FEW: Family

Entertainment Wrestling. What I tell the wrestlers is they're signed to a contract. A pay contract and all those other legalities. In there it states no drugs, no alcohol. If you show up with alcohol or anything on your breath, your through and I can take you to court. Here's the contract. Read the contract before you do anything. If you want to treat the business good, the business will treat you good. I'm a professional in my business. You know I drank and I had fun and everything, but my business came first. I didn't go to the matches drunk. I didn't do anything. I looked after my business.

WP: Do you think the change in wrestlers' attitudes is related to the national expansion of the mid-Eighties and the decline of regional territories?

DJ: I think that's part of it, but I think it's life itself. People just don't put out quality work anymore. You know it's just get the buck, to hell with everybody else. To hell with everything and move on. Like there's 10,000 other customers who can buy my product. With no organizations, every Tom, Dick and Harry is a wrestler. I try to run a little wrestling school. They come in for about four or five weeks and they're like, "Well, I know everything." The first

thing I ask them is "Do you watch wrestling on TV?" "Yes." "Do you watch the WWF, WCW, and all that?" "Yes." "Can you do any of that stuff?" "Oh, that's easy." Yet when you take them in the gym, they don't know a damn thing. After three or four weeks, they think they know it. They're all smartened up already to what's going on. TV has helped wrestling in one way, but I think it's taken it back to the dark ages in others. It's smartened everybody up. If everybody's smartened up, you can't do business. All they do is cater to the five-and-six-year olds and they make more money merchandising that they do anything else. At one time wrestling was respected.

WP: Jim Crockett described wrestling as something of a magic act, in that if you know how a magician does the trick, you probably aren't going to see him again. Do you agree with that?

DJ: Maybe. I think at least when I wrestled, there was a certain amount of mystery. A lot of people would say, "Well the first few matches aren't on the up and up, but when that last match came, that's when they were doing their job." Wrestling is a very unique and complicated business. I try, when I have conferences with some of these kids that have wrestled a little bit and when I talk to them they're disillusioned after I tell them. When I was in Canada a couple of years ago, I talked to guys that were 6'5", 250 pounds, in great shape. The only thing they thought about was going to the WWF. That was the mountain top for them. Yet the only thing they're doing now is catering to the clowns, the circus crowd, and they're not even doing a good job on that. I mean it's ridiculous. You ask these guys, "You've got an hour time limit, could you go an hour?" "Oh jeez, I can't go that long. They go two or three minutes, the only thing you see is 10,000 clotheslines, a cover, one-two-three. That's supposed to be wrestling. Meanwhile they've got interviews a half hour long. To me, that's not wrestling.

WP: Do you think anyone is successfully aiming towards what it used to be like? Jim

Cornette's Smoky Mountain Wrestling for example.

DJ: Well, the only thing is I've heard about him is there's a lot of blood. I don't believe in blood. In the old days, we used to say, "Red one day and green the next." But I mean they've got some promotions here that are ridiculous. Blood every night. They still don't understand that wrestlers get around and they get around the world and around the country and with the advent of AIDS and hepatitis, which is rampant. You don't even have to have an open cut to get AIDS. If somebody pours some blood on you, you've got it. Just getting in touch with it. They don't realize it. To me wrestling today is garbage. The stuff on TV and some of the shows I see around Florida and other places, it's ridiculous. I'm sure many of the old time promoters that are dead in the graves would turn over in their graves if they saw what was going on. Like Eddie Graham and a lot of the other great promoters. They had great minds for the business and didn't insult your intelligence.

WP: Do you think there are promotions in the US or Japan that cater to a more intelligent audience or are they as you said, "garbage?"

DJ: I don't really know. I talk to a lot of different people and discuss wrestling around the world. There are a lot of different promotions. I understand some of the promotions in Japan are good. But there again, they're going for the bizarre; chain matches, chain saw matches and barbed wire matches, flames. It's like if you see Jesus Christ, what are you going to follow it with. That's it. In the old days, most of the promoters were smart. They did not want big shows. Once in a while, when something got red hot, two wrestlers got hot, a situation got hot, they would throw a big spectacular card. But the only thing is, when they came back the next week or six weeks later, the place was dead because they had seen something they had never seen before that was spectacular. But now, everything is so spectacular, they just try to beat each other. It's just going to continue

to the point where it's ridiculous.

WP: An example I've used is when Eddie Gilbert runs over Jerry Lawler with a car, how do you follow that?

DJ: That's exactly what I mean. I see some shows, I don't even look at them. I get so mad I want to shoot my TV. You know the old saying, "Well, when I was there I did this and so and so." We all say that, no matter how history evolves itself. But what they've done to wrestling in the last few years; in 1985, they had 30 major wrestling offices. Within two or three years, there wasn't one worthwhile. I talk to a lot of young wrestlers to make sure they have their head on straight. Yet, they don't want to go through the hard times. They want to be a star. On top of that, there's no place for them to go and learn their trade anymore. Before you could go and learn your trade and make money along with it. You can't even make a living now. I talk to a lot of small time promoters, wrestlers. Florida is just loaded with them: wrestling schools, wrestling promotions, and managers. Everybody I talk to, "Well here's my card," and is says on there "manager and promoter and wrestler and whatever." It's disgusting.

WP: Do you think there is anyway to turn it around?

DJ: Well I think it just has to be cleansed. Get rid of the garbage and get some new ideas. We have to move into the 21st century. It's the nineties and the 21st century is coming. I kind of equate it to the radio shows. In the thirties, forties and fifties, radio was everywhere. We all heard it and finally they saturated the market. Wrestling has done the same thing. But it looks like wrestling doesn't want to come back. I mean it may come back, but it's expensive to run a wrestling show. There's so much involved with insurance, liability, trying to get wrestlers to the show, make sure they're there on time, they're not drugged up. Trying to keep them in the ring...

WP: Wrestling had a period, after a lot of

national exposure in the late fifties and early sixties where it where it went into a lull. Do you see this as different from the last one?

DJ: The market is so over saturated. With cable you can watch 10 to 15 hours of wrestling, why go to a live event? I don't think wrestling will ever die as long as people are knowledgeable. But I think it will take time to get it going again. It will never come back to the way it was. I don't care what kind of business or entertainment it is. But it has to evolve like everything else.

WP: Are there any people capable of turning things around? For instance, someone to cleanse WCW and turn it around in a positive direction?

DJ: When I look at WCW, I see a lot of the old timers. They use the same stories. It's run by a TV station, so how can you do wrestling when it's run by a TV station? The only thing they care about is the ratings. Just like in Hollywood. Hollywood used to be run by movie stars, directors, actors, producers and owners. Now, they're all run by big conglomerates like Sony and all the rest. That's the way wrestling is going to be. Atlanta just cares about the ratings. So they have a committee of 16 people making up matches. They want guys that are 6'8", 280 pounds. that are apes in good shape and can go two minutes. They don't care about anything else. It's proven when they go to the house shows, they don't draw a dime. They draw 200 people and the shows are ridiculous. When they come to Florida, they don't draw anything. When I was with the WWF, this was '84, '85, even at that time - you didn't hear it on TV because of the sound crew and everything - but they were hollering "bullshit" then. It would be like waves, "bullshit, bullshit" until maybe the last, final match. In fact, some of the wrestlers, before they even entered the ring, they'd even call "bullshit" out to them as they were walking down the aisle.

WP: Was this just in the northeast or nationwide?

DJ: No this was nationwide. Well maybe not so much on the west coast, but eventually it did get there.

WP: Yet that was as the WWF's national popularity was increasing.

DJ: Even then they were chanting that.

WP: How would you describe your stay there?

DJ: Well, I made money while I was there, but it was difficult because I had to put up with all the druggies... between the double crossing, backstabbing, druggies and faggots. I wasn't involved in that, all those little clicks. I just kind of squeezed in, made a few dollars and got out. Actually, they wanted to abuse me. They wanted to abuse me on TV. If you want to ruin my reputation, go ahead and fight me. That's exactly the way I feel about it. Drugs have ruined not only wrestling, but the world. I used to see guys making \$15,000 a week that were spending \$10,000 of it on drugs. I used to say, "You know what I should do is just wrestle in the first match and have my little suitcase full of drugs and gold and I'd make a fortune in about five years." On one side I'd have all the drugs, on the other side, I'd have all the rings, bracelets, gold necklaces and everything the guys wore and wanted in volume and everybody would buy them. I'd be all set.

WP: Do you think it would take a whole five years to retire doing that?

DJ: Well, (laughs) I was a little greedy. I was going to say about a year, but I said to myself I should say five because they might not use me all the time. If they were using me the same way they were in '84, '85, it would take five years because I used to wrestle a month or two, then be off another month, overseas for four or five weeks, then come back and I'd be off another month.

WP: At that time, it was well known that George Zahorian was selling steroids. Was it very open, people selling steroids and drugs?

DJ: Oh yes. You used to get into the

dressing room and he'd have two little packages, all the Valiums, all the steroids. He had everything. Anything you wanted. Like two little suitcases full of drugs. They were all packaged and you just went in there, "What do you want?" In fact, he'd even send you the stuff if he knew you. Like if you wrestled there and talked to him on the phone, "What do you need?" Because I knew few guys that used to call him up, "Hey I need this, I need that." "Well don't worry about it." A couple days later, it would be in the mail.

WP: Do you think drug testing is helping in that regard?

DJ: No. It's not helping in any sport, baseball, and football and basketball. With the growth hormone and all the technology, they can overcome that. The guys just go to something else. They go to growth hormone. Well you can't detect growth hormone as a drug.

WP: Unfortunately, it's more dangerous than some of the other drugs they are taking.

DJ: I used to see some of the guys that I traveled with that were taking growth hormone. First of all, they were taking five or six different steroids. After a while, the soft bone structure in their face shifted. They started looking like an ape. They used to buy this stuff in the gym. I used to say, "you should test this stuff." "Oh yeah, I want to get stronger." It looks like mucous. You'd shake it up and it would be like milk. Like little particles of matter in there.

WP: With what's happened to Billy Graham and all the problems he's had as a result of steroids, apparently it's falling on deaf ears. Do you think there's anything that can be done to change that?

DJ: Well you see here the problem is there's kind of an unwritten law. A lot of it I suppose is not only wrestling, but our society. We want you to compete. We don't care how you compete. We want you to be a winner. Our whole society is built on winning. Not number two or three, but being number one. We don't care how you

do it. You can cheat, you can steal, you can lie or whatever, just don't get caught. And that's the same way with wrestling. The promoters says, "Look, I don't want any fat people in here." Even in my day, "Get that belly off, get a tan, otherwise brother, you're out. We don't want fat people. We want guys in good shape who look like athletes. Dress like them and so on."

WP: *So basically steroid use has been implied by promoters, "If you want to get a push, it's going to take 20 more pounds..."*

DJ: "Twenty more pounds, no fat. Be in good shape. A lot of muscle. I don't care how you do it, just do it. I'm not telling you how to do it, but you just do it. If you want to get booked in my territory, if you want to work on top, I you want to be a main eventer. I'll do all the rest, but you have to look good. I don't give a damn how you do it."

WP: *Jerry Jarrett recently said he doesn't feel he's encouraging steroid use, but if you look at the people he's hiring, a lot of them appear, on the surface at least, to be on steroids. Yet he says as far as he's concerned, he's looking for people who can work. When you see the workrate is like, that's obviously not the case. Do you see that as a major contradiction?*

DJ: Well sure. He's saying black is white. He's saying exactly what all the other promoters are saying, "I don't care how you do it. Don't tell me how you do it. Just do it. And if you get caught, you're going to pay for it, not me." It's just like lawsuits. The promoters tell you to go out there and get lots of heat, you know. But if you get into trouble, they say, "Well hey buddy, good luck you're on your own. You fight your own lawsuit because I've had some lawsuits."

WP: *That seems like it was more common a while back when, particularly in the south, when the heel would get as lot of heat and the fans would attack. While it's not good for that to happen, do you think*

those days are gone as well because it seems like audience are a bit stagnant?

DJ: Well I think they're gone for a while. I remember in 1967, '68 when I was in Dallas. The old Wrestlepop in San Antonio. There were a lot of Mexicans and Whites and Blacks. But they used to throw fishhooks off the top of the balcony onto the wrestlers going back and forth in the ring. We got heat, you know. We got the people really riled up and they used to throw bottles at you. Fishhooks would catch. I got them many times. In fact, one time, myself, Gary Hart and Buddy Austin were in the ring and we did a little angle and it was hot and everything. Of course Buddy liked to drink right before the match. He liked Canadian Club. Somebody threw a bottle of tequila off the balcony and it split his head open. I pushed him back to the dressing room and he was bleeding. He had a good sense of humor and a real deep voice and when he got to the dressing room and rubbed he head, his blood and everything let the alcohol in, and he said (imitating Austin) "Well at least they could of hit me with Canadian Club." So I think, back then, there were a lot of clicks, but they were mostly drinking clicks. I think it was about 1970 when the drugs proliferated the business.

WP: *As early as 1970?*

DJ: 1970, yes. When I went to Australia in 1969. A few of the guys were into it, but they were hush, hush. "Do you want to smoke?" "No, I don't smoke." Then they'd snicker. Within five years, they didn't give a damn. "Hey man, can you hook me up? I've got to score tonight. Can you go in my place early or later on? I want to score a little later today. You want a hit?" It's ruined this business, like it's ruined any other business.

WP: *What do you think is the answer (to drug use) is?*

DJ: I don't know. The only thing is that I think the competition is so stiff, and so fast, so furious that the business, not only sports and entertainment, but all of them, they don't care that you last for 10, 15 or 20

years like in the old days. If you get over, in a movie or a good move, or a star in baseball, football or anything. The don't give a damn about you because they've got 10,000 other kids waiting to get a job. The only way I can see it is if you get out of wrestling and you want to get political. You go to South America. You go to Peru, Bolivia, and you say, "Hey we're coming down here and were going to bomb your damn fields for drugs and everything. We don't want that stuff coming into our country. They've got a 3,000-mile border. Why not use the Army, the Air Force, now that the cold war is over and supposedly there's no threat? Put them along the border in the South. That's where it has to come in. It's like they said when they wanted to do away with Kennedy. I mean it's a terrible thing to say, but when they wanted to kill Kennedy, they don't want to do away with Bobby. When you want to kill the snake, you don't cut the tail off, you cut the head. That's where you have to go. You have to go to the source.

WP: *So if there's no supply, presumably there's no demand.*

DJ: The president of Mexico said a couple of years ago in regards the problem and all the appeals to do something about it. He said, "Listen, that's your problem, not ours. It's the demand. If your people didn't demand it up there, then we wouldn't supply it."

WP: *How would you change it from a demand side?*

DJ: Well, I think that actually you'd have to change the way of life. Instead of making everybody number one, it's been perpetuated from kindergarten. There are people who have to be number two or number three. Much of it is propaganda. We talk about Russia and all those countries with propaganda. Well they use propaganda on us everyday; TV, newspapers and everything to keep everybody in line. So I believe, like the sixties, when they had all the riots and everything and I was wrestling all around the country... It was a difficult time. I'm sure that the big shots in

Washington said," Look if these people are up here rioting, they're not making car payments, not making a mortgage payment, they're not buying new clothes, buying clothes for the kids, what the hell are they doing? They're rioting in the streets. So what we have to do is cause a little inflation." I remember within a short time the cost of cars doubled in two years. I mean cars, they cause inflation, but they keep people under control and that's

basically what this democratic society is: to keep people under control. They don't care if people are doing drugs. It's "Well OK, were going to put you in jail and put you in the system. We ought to stop breaking up the families, stop the divorce rate, the drugs. We don't have any leaders. There's no one standing up. I see all these athletes. Black, White, yellow, green, whatever that come from poor backgrounds. But I never see them going

back into the community and contributing to the community. I never see that. I never hear about that. It may be on a small basis, a local basis. I never see it with any big stars making 15, 20 million dollars playing baseball. I like sports and everything. I've been in it all my life. I've been in wrestling all my life, since I was 15 hitchhiking to the towns. It's a real involvement which you don't see know. The attitude (has changed).

Potshots From Around The World: Street Fighter True

By - Bill "Potshot" Kunkel

Several trends - the Global Village, the incredible proliferation of martial arts disciplines, and the fascination with electronic "street fighter" games - culminated in a Pay-Per-View cable TV event which has forever changed my perception and enjoyment of pro wrestling, as well as my understanding of self defense.

The event was the Ultimate Fighting Championships, in which proponents of such diverse specialties as sumo, boxing, tae kwon do, savate, and shoot wrestling engaged in competition to produce an Ultimate Fighter. A video game brought to life.

The rules were minimal - no groin shots (Dusty Rhodes was not able to participate, therefore), and no eye gouges - with the contestants fighting inside an octagonal ring. The action didn't stop when an opponent hit the perimeter, either - only submission (signified by rapidly tapping the mat) could produce a finish.

A caveat: this event was promoted by the Gracie Family, the creators and proponents of the Gracie style of Jui-Jitsu as forged by patriarch Helio Gracie. Gracie reportedly

sought out opponents from a variety of disciplines to determine which was most effective, and developed a fascinating style based on a simple truth of street fighting: most of the matches wind up on the ground. The fighter best able to control the action on the ground, therefore, is most likely to emerge victorious.

However, while Royce Gracie is the greatest living practitioner of Gracie Jui-Jitsu, the boxer, shootfighter, kickboxers, etc. were not at the same level of expertise within their discipline. Nonetheless, they were not bums.

The cast was interesting. In addition to Gracie, we had Art Jimmerson, the WBC cruiserweight boxing champ; Gerard Gordeau, an aging savate master; Kevin Rosier, an out-of-shape kickboxer with a club-like right hand; Patrick Smith, a karate man and kickboxing contender, self-described as "the most craziest" contestant there; Ken Shamrock, billed as a shootfighter rather than a wrestler, he works in Japan with the Pancrase group and is a skilled submission-style grappler; Zane Frazier, a military man and a ranked kempo karate fighter; and Teila Tuli, a former pro

sumo wrestler still hefting 400 pounds.

The first match of the quarter-finals was pretty indicative of what the rest of the card would be like. Gordeau, the savate fighter from Amsterdam, probably didn't weigh 200 pounds, but he took out the sumo Tuli in less than a minute. In fact, although I believe the matches were set at five five-minute rounds, not one match in the entire tournament lasted a single round.

After a bit of obligatory feinting, Tuli charged at Gordeau, who easily sidestepped him, allowing the sumo to crash into the chickenwire ring enclosure. Tuli fell to the mat, where the lithe Gordeau delivered a brutal kick to the back of his head, knocking out a tooth in the process. The kick stunned Tuli, and Gordeau followed with an overhand right to the sumo's head. The referee, clearly uncertain as to how he should proceed, stepped in and stopped the match. Tuli was bleeding from several facial cuts, and blood was also trickling steadily from his eye. There was quite a bit of banter with the cornermen ("Is he ready to continue?") before Tuli's people tossed in the towel.

It proved a tough victory for the Dutchman,

however; the punch to Tuli's head had shattered a bone in his right hand.

Next, Rosier took on Frazier. Rosier is a former kickboxing champion who'd been retired for at least a year before being tapped for this event. He apparently lost 45 pounds in the three weeks he had to train, but was still shockingly overweight, and out of condition. This was painfully obvious fighting in Denver, a city where the air is so thin even sustained walking is difficult for newcomers.

Frazier is a kempo karate fighter, and the first contestant so far to have anything resembling a muscleman physique. Both men basically slugged it out in the middle of the ring, and both were severely blown up by the three-minute mark. Frazier dominated, in fact, until Rosier landed an unexpected haymaker that dropped Zane against the enclosure. As Frazier dropped to the mat, Rosier threw whatever he had left at him, finally dropping a couple of brutal heel shots to his head before Zane's corner sent the towel flying across the ring. Rosier's face was cut to pieces, including a nasty gash over one eye, but he combined exhaustion and exuberance in his post-fight interview.

Next up, Gracie demonstrated how rarefied a form of self-defense boxing can be. Jimmerson came to the ring with his left hand in a glove and his right hand uncovered. His right hand was already making a mistake. Nonetheless, he obviously wanted to risk duplicating Gordea's dubious accomplishment.

When a boxer - or a kickboxer, or karate man, or any thrusting style fighter - faces a jui-jitsu fighter, the strategy, from both sides, is obvious. The boxer cannot allow the jui-jitsu artist inside; he must stun him with a hard, quick blow, and end it then and there. If the jui-jitsu man gets inside and grabs him, it is over. Which is exactly what happened here. Used to the rules and conventions of pro boxing, Jimmerson was dead meat. Gracie came in low and grabbed

him, taking his opponent to the mat. Gracie immediately locked his legs around the boxer's waist, scissoring him and cutting off his breathing. Next, Gracie - the only contestant wearing a any type of upper body covering - wrapped his arms around Jimmerson, encircling and defeating him with the inevitability of an anaconda entwined around its prey. Frustrated, unable to move and tiring rapidly, Jimmerson tapped out, leaving Gracie - and his brother the promoter - infuriated. Gracie even refused to grant an interview and stormed back into the dressing room.

The final match of the first round saw motormouth kickboxer Smith face off against shooter Shamrock. Smith produced a lot of pre-match gas about being "oblivious to pain," but when Shamrock locked his leg and ankle up in a classic submission move, Smith proved an apt pupil. He threw a wild kick that actually cut Shamrock across the forehead and attempted to loosen his opponent's vise-like grip with a couple of feeble bionic elbows before tapping out, showing an intuitive grasp of how pain works.

In his post-match interview, Shamrock played the arrogant heel, sneering at Smith (who had to be helped from the ring) and proclaiming the match "easier" than his fights in Japan "because he [Smith] doesn't know submissions." When asked what he was thinking while Smith attempted to stare him down during the ring instructions, he replied: "You'll get yours, pal." Director John Milius (*Red Dawn*, *Conan the Barbarian*, and many other testosterone-drenched classics) expressed himself as impressed with DeNiro lookalike Shamrock. But Shamrock demurred: "I like fightin'."

The first round over, the semifinal competition started with Gordea taking on Rosier. Gordea's right hand was grotesquely swollen, balloon-sized as he stepped into the enclosure, and Rosier's face was riddled with barely patched cuts. Rosier was also clearly spent. The Denver

altitude and his own lack of conditioning made him unable to exploit Gordea's broken hand.

Once again, Gordea took the first opportunity to take his opponent down against the chickenwire. Like Tuli, Rosier never got up. Every time he reached his knees, Gordea would knock him back down. The towel or the tap was soon inevitable. Rosier was good-natured in defeat, and even made noises about returning to the kickboxing circuit.

Everyone, however, was impressed by Gracie, who was clearly the most impressive and well-schooled fighter there. The announcers, including Jim Brown, all agreed that the next match, a semifinal elimination between Gracie and Shamrock would be the best match of the night.

Shamrock kept Gracie at bay for about a minute, then began to move single-mindedly for the leg, hoping to duplicate his submission victory over Smith. In the process, he forgot to guard his throat, and chokes are a key element in the Gracie style. Watching Gracie slowly encircle Shamrock was once again uncannily similar to seeing a constrictor engage in a dance of death with a rat. This time, Gracie got on Shamrock's back, from which position he threw his left arm across the wrestler's throat, grabbed the sleeve of his gi with his right hand, and pulled. Shamrock wasted no time tapping out, but the referee somehow missed it. After a brief discussion, Gracie's hand was raised in victory and we were headed to the finals for a showdown between Royce and Gordea. However, the Dutchman's right hand was now useless and against one of the most effective street fighters in the world, he couldn't have prevailed with *three* good hands.

Although the promoters had reserved three hours of satellite time, the show was over well before the two hour mark. As one of the alternates who wound up fighting in order to kill time put it: "If a match last longer than two minutes, the fighters don't

know what they're doing." The fighters all seemed to be suitably impressed with Gracie's technique, and promised to brush up on their ground technique. But the kickboxers, boxers, and karate guys are likely to remain pretenders rather than contenders on this circuit; like being on the team that tours with the Harlem Globetrotters.

The lack of rules was amazing, and lent an anything-can-happen air to the proceedings.

At one point, Frazier grabbed Rozier by the hair and started hammering his fist into Rozier's face - and it was all perfectly legal. We also saw how stylized and unrealistic the street fighter-style video games are. Obsessed as they are with punches, kicks, throws, and outright magic, they fail to grasp an essential of true street fighting: the action invariably winds up on the ground, where punches, kicks and throws are about as useful as breasts on a bull.

It also has had an irreversible effect on my perception of pro wrestling, which now seems so staged and choreographed, it is difficult for me to maintain interest in even good product.

Apparently the early indicators on the Ultimate Fighting Championships, PPV-wise, were encouraging and the people behind this event are talking about PPVs as often as once a month. For now, I'll buy another.

Letters To The Editors

Everyone knows I'm one of the biggest fans of "The Phantom." Ten years ago he was the first smart writer of the mags and I've learned much of what I know from him. But I've been bothered since Issue #32 when he theorized that California was more of a mark for the Japanese stereotype than the rest of the country. Los Angeles has a large Oriental population and I've never sensed any racial hostility growing up during the fifties (at least after we let them out of the jail cells we placed them in during World War II). They're a respectful and hard-working people who are easy to live with. I never thought about it much. So his theory took me by surprise and I don't believe it's true. We had a lot of Japanese villains over the years, but no one ever believe they were really from Japan. The fans were just following the script like they were supposed to and we had great heels to follow. Mr. Moto, the Togos, Shibuya and Tanaka were all great wrestlers. Everyone use to joke that they were from East L.A. and we all knew that Mr. Moto was a war hero. The real Japanese wrestlers were always pushed as faces. Look at the names and you'll see that no other area in the U.S. pushed as many Japanese faces. Rikidozan (WWA Champion), Kontaro (WWA Champion), Toyonobori (WWA Champion), Fujinami, Inoki and Sakaguchi all worked as fan favorites. Shohei Baba sold out the Olympic four times against the Destroyer and Freddie Blassie and he always worked as a face in L.A., unlike on the east coast where he was always portrayed as a killer heel. We also didn't change their names so our fans could

pronounce them. Toyonobori was Toyonobori, not Tokyo Joe or Mr. Hito. The exception to this was Inoki who worked as Little Tokyo, but I don't think he wanted to be known by his Brazilian name Antonio at the time. Plus, he was doing jobs every night for the Destroyer. As for Mr. Moto, Blassie was not cheered against him. The great feud turned Moto into one of L.A.'s most beloved heroes from 1962 on. I remember in 1964 the fans cheering for Moto all through the night's card wanting him to run out of the dressing room to take on the villain of the moment. In later years, Moto became the booker. It was a sad day for everyone when we found out "Charlie" Moto died two years ago.

But then again, maybe I'm wrong. Maybe we all are racist out here in L.A. I mean through the years every heel in Texas and the south came from Beverly Hills. Even Bobby Heenan. In the *Observer*, it was proven to me that Bill Watts had to be a Nazi because he made Ron Simmons a world champion and Ernie Ladd a booker, so I may be wrong again. I'm sorry, I just don't understand these things.

Anyway, I forgive "The Phantom" and he's still my idol, even though he's taken to rewriting old columns from *The Forum* instead of coming up with new ideas. I hope he forgives me, like I forgave him when he criticized me for saying in *The Forum* that I thought Stan Hansen was great. Funny, as wrong as I seemed, I still think he's great. Man I'm the guy who in the

sheets has defended Bill Watts, the Steiners, Hulk Hogan, Mike Lano and now California. I must be a loser.

On a separate note, I've got an idea for a Phantom column. I was watching *Sumo From San Jose* a couple of days ago and liked it a lot. They were talking about Grand Champions (Yokozuna) and how few make it to that class of champion. In over 200 years, only a little over 60 have made the classification. It takes more than winning to be one. You have to be a champion in every way. It's, of course, very subjective. I was wondering who were the grand champions of wrestling and I brought the subject up to my friend John Williams. Off the top, we both agreed on Lou Thesz and Buddy Rogers without an argument. Of the present day American wrestlers, we could only pick two for sure: Ric Flair and Stan Hansen. I think we agreed on Frank Gotch, Ed Lewis, Joe Stecher and George Hackenschmidt (probably not getting The Phantom's vote). I forgot, but I like Earl Caddock also, Jim Londos. Stanislaus Zbyszko didn't make it, although I would vote for the Great Gama. Hogan, Gorgeous George, Blassie, the Destroyer didn't make it. Killer Kowalski and Verne Gagne made it, but could be contested by Williams in the future. He wouldn't give me Edouard Carpentier and I didn't vote for Dory Funk Jr. Harley Race made the team, but Fritz Von Erich, Terry Funk and Ricky Steamboat didn't. We both think Big Van Vader will, but needs more time. It seemed easier with the Japanese as we gave yes

votes to Rikidozan, Shohei Baba and we let Inoki sneak in. I want Fujinami and Tiger Mask, but Williams wants Tsuruta and Tenryu. We both want Brusier Brody, but were not sure because of attitude. Well what do you thing? I'd like to hear what The Phantom and everyone else feels. It's kind of fun and it's better than kicking old dogs like WCW and Vince McMahon.

Oh yeah, Yokozuna didn't make it. Nor Fuji.

Must be my Japanese prejudice.

Steve Yohe
Alhambra, CA

P&D: It should be clarified that, with the exception of The Phantom's article on the best wrestling writers of all time and the current series on the angels, everything published in Wrestling Perspective is first run. We republished the aforementioned pieces for two reasons: One the Phantom wanted to rewrite them because he thought he could significantly improve them and two, at

the time these articles were published in The Forum, the readership was bottoming out, as they appeared shortly before it ceased publication. Additionally, part III of the Angel series was never printed due to the problems with the Forum.

In reference to the Yokozuna, we are very interested in our readers' thoughts on this issue. It's just plain fun, but we do like it and would like to see what our readers think. As for the Phantom, we doubt he'll remain silent about who he thinks the true Yokozuna is for too long.

Phantom Flashback: Angels With Dirty Faces, Part III

By - The Phantom Of The Ring

In the last two columns, we covered just about everything we could about the Angel phenomenon and the career of Maurice Tillet. However, though Tillet was the first to use the gimmick, he was by no stretch of the imagination the most popular, or even well-known, wrestling Angel. His popularity was exceeded by an Angel-cum-lately, who garnered almost all of his fame outside the squared circle.

This man was Tor Johnson (1907-1968), about whom we know more from his work on the silver screen than from his work inside the ring. Most movie buffs and especially fans of "B movies" know Johnson from his years of work in poverty row productions. Few, however, know about his wrestling career. That's because his wrestling career was hardly stellar.

The details of Johnson's wrestling career are sketchy at best. He was born Tor Johnson in Sweden, and came to America as a young boy. With job prospects being somewhat low for immigrants in the late Twenties, he turned to wrestling. He began working for Jack Pfeiffer in New York in 1929 and in the early Thirties, he worked under the name Tor Johnson. The earliest result I have on him from this period is

from 1932 in a victory over Elmer Anderson. He worked mainly as a middle-of-the-card performer, with an occasional main event, most likely due to his size. He moved out to California shortly thereafter and made it the base of his operations, which would take him on many world tours. Johnson was a wrestler who employed his huge size as his gimmick; he stood somewhere in the neighborhood of 6'5" and 360 pounds.

It was in the movies, however, that Johnson made his mark. In 1935, W.C. Fields needed two wrestlers for his movie *Man On The Flying Trapeze*. Johnson was called for the part, Fields noticed his size and hired him. In the movie, Johnson is airplane spun out of the ring and sails out the door and onto Fields, who is watching the matches through the doorway. This was the beginning of Johnson's movie career, which would easily eclipse his wrestling career.

During the late Thirties, his wrestling ship came in and he embarked on the first of many world tours. The highlight of this tour was a match against Emile "King Kong" Czazya in Malaya in front of a reported 80,000 spectators. There was also

a rumor that he wrestled and defeated the Great Gama on this tour, but that has never been confirmed. In the early Forties, Johnson returned to the States as just another large bald wrestler without a gimmick. Enter his old friend Pfeiffer who decided Johnson would be great as an Angel. As he was Swedish, the moniker "Swedish Angel" would have been perfect, but Phil Olafsson was already known under that alias, so Johnson was dubbed "The Super Swedish Angel." He used that name until Olafsson's retirement in 1951, thereafter using the "Swedish Angel" name. Johnson continued to tour the world until retiring from the ring in 1960. I have scattered results on him from Singapore to Bombay to Chicago to Newark. During this time, Johnson's claim to fame was also his handicap: his girth. Because he wasn't one of the better workers in the game, he never became a consistent main eventer. However, his girth, menacing look and eventually his Angel gimmick ensured his presence one many wrestling cards, sometimes even working the featured match.

If Johnson had simply remained in wrestling, no one but hardcore wrestling historians would have heard of him, and then only as a mere curiosity. But Johnson

became an attraction in the movies and it is through this avenue most wrestling fans know him. For instance, Johnson has to be the only wrestler who has a mask modeled after him. It is the very popular mask that is seen in the stands in countless NFL games and Hollywood parades.

No one however, ever said Johnson made good movies, or rather, had large roles in good movies. He was in a few decent movies, such as *The Road To Rio* (1948) and *Carousel* (1956). But in both of these, he had small parts.

The usual Johnson movie, and the ones he is best known for, is along the lines of *The Human Gorilla* or *The Black Sleep*. Here he usually played a poor insane fool; horrifying, but not without sympathy. Or at least as much sympathy as can be mustered in flicks like these.

Johnson appeared as a wrestler in two movies: *Abbott and Costello In The Foreign Legion* and the 1951 Republic laff riot starring Gorgeous George, *Alias The Champ*. The latter is considered one of the most wretched films ever made. Johnson receives little screen time as one of the Gorgeous One's opponents. In the Abbott and Costello film, Johnson plays a Middle-Eastern wrestler who returns to his homeland, taking the other main-eventer, Wee Willie Davis, with him. Abbott and Costello, cast as wrestling promoters, chase

after them to convince them to return.

While Johnson may have been the most prolific Angel turned actor, he was not the only one to do so. Wladislaw Tulin, the Polish Angel, played the part of Goliath in the 1951 Gregory Peck/Susan Hayward opus *David and Bathsheba*. Tulin, however had one thing Johnson did not have: a speaking part. In only one film did Johnson have a substantial speaking part, and that was the notorious *Plan Nine From Outer Space*.

Among movies buffs, and especially Psychotronic movie buffs, Johnson is best remembered for his association with the late, lamented, Ed Wood Jr., who "directed" Johnson in three of his movies *Bride Of The Monster*, *Plan Nine From Outer Space* and *Night Of The Ghouls*. The third film was never released to theaters because of an unpaid lab bill, but now a belated video hit. Johnson was especially useful to Wood because, in addition to his appearance which was custom made for horror pictures, his son Carl, was a member of the Los Angeles Police Department and helped supply Wood with uniforms. This fact explains why policemen appear so frequently in Wood movies. Not everything about their association, however, was rosy. It seems that Wood's main complaint about Johnson was that every time the 360 pound Johnson came over to Wood's house, he usually ended up breaking up the toilet seat.

Johnson's last movie was the dreadful *Beat of Yucca Flats*. In this opus, he played a scientist exposed to dangerous amounts of radiation, and you can pretty well figure out the rest from there. His most popular character was a monster mute named Lobo, whom he first portrayed in *Bride Of The Monster*, and later reprised for *Night Of The Ghouls* and Republic's *The Unearthly*, another laff riot starring John Carradine as the usual mad scientist and Johnson as one of his unsuccessful experiments.

Fans know him best, however, for his role as Lt. Clay in *Plan Nine From Outer Space*. This movie is beloved by bad movie fans around the world who affectionately dub it "the worst movie ever made." However, I tend to agree with film critic Michael Weldon, who said it wasn't the worst movie made, but it is the most entertaining bad movie ever made. Johnson simply played the same character he played in every other film, only this time he had a few lines of dialogue, and sounds convincing as a bad liar.

Amazingly, given the amount of publicity devoted to Johnson over the past 10 years, there is almost nothing written about him. However, plans are in the works to correct this oversight. A book on his life and a film is supposedly in the works. We can only say that it's about time.

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Jim Cornette Interviewed In Wrestling Perspective

Smoky Mountain Wrestling Promoter, SMW and WWF Heel Manager Jim Cornette speaks at length in the latest issue of Wrestling Perspective. You may have read his interviews before, but this series tops them all as Cornette discusses his views on running a small promotion, violence in wrestling, his falling out with long-time friend Stan Lane, his involvement in the Real Wrestling Hotline, offensive wrestling angles, and even race relations and xenophobia. Of course, with Jim Cornette, there's much more. This fantastic two and a half hour interview appears in issues 37 (a double issue) & 38 of Wrestling Perspective and is something no wrestling fan can afford to miss.

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- The Stan Lane interview, where Stan reminisces about his best and worst moments in pro wrestling, his plans for the future, Smoky Mountain Wrestling, blading and much more in issue 36.
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